

# NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

## EVENT PLANNING KIT

### Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for your interest in National Radon Action Month. Radon is a serious health risk facing tens of thousands of Americans. Exposure to radon gas causes more than 20,000 deaths annually and it is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. The challenge is that we can't see, smell, or taste it, so it's easy to forget that radon may be a problem in any home, school, or building in the country. To protect the lives of all Americans, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month. This is a great opportunity to increase awareness of radon, promote testing and mitigation, and advance the use of radon-resistant new construction practices.

Individuals, groups and organizations concerned about healthy people, homes and communities are the driving force in getting the message out to the public about the dangers of indoor radon. Your efforts are important, and EPA wants to do everything possible to make it easier for you. That is why we have developed this Event Planning Kit for your use.

The Kit includes helpful suggestions and many useful templates for you to customize. In it you will find:

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You will find information and materials in this Kit that you can use to get the word out about radon. Use these resources to conduct activities that will yield real progress toward reducing radon risk. The materials are designed to be customized, so please feel free to add or delete language, combine projects, or—even better—invent your own new projects!

Radon can be deadly, but remember that the message you are delivering is a hopeful one. Testing for radon and addressing radon risk can save lives. We wish you the greatest success with your National Radon Action Month activities.

Please visit [www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html) for help planning and publicizing your National Radon Action Month activities.

# Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities

January is National Radon Action Month—a perfect time to promote radon awareness, testing and mitigation, and radon resistant new construction (RRNC). Radon testing is generally easiest and most effective in the cooler weather months when houses tend to be closed up for warmth. Contact your state radon program, available at [www.epa.gov/iaq/whereyoulive.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/whereyoulive.html), for help in planning your activities. Possible activities include:

Please see pages 6 and 8 of this Kit for information on obtaining radon test kits and ordering customizable test kit coupons for tracking your activities.

## Community Events

- ▶ **Hold a Radon Poster Contest.** The National Safety Council conducts an annual radon poster contest during the radon testing season. Start planning your poster contest early and work with your local school(s) to get students to design radon posters. For more information on the National Safety Council radon poster contest, visit [www.nsc.org/issues/radon](http://www.nsc.org/issues/radon).



- ▶ **Ask Your Mayor or City Council to Issue a Radon Proclamation.** Have January declared “Radon Action Month” in your community and encourage all community members to test for radon. A sample proclamation that you can customize is included in this Event Planning Kit on page 14.



- ▶ **Conduct a Radon Test Challenge.** Challenges are a fun way to encourage testing within your community. Contact a radon test kit manufacturer (a list can be obtained from your state radon office) to obtain test kits, possibly at a discounted price and offer a challenge and “reward” for the most test kits distributed, conducted, and sent to the lab for analysis. Challenges can be conducted between cities (have your mayor challenge a neighboring community) or within your community (have schools in your community challenge each other). However you conduct your challenge, offer a “reward” for the challenge winner, but also acknowledge all participants. Check your state laws on contests before planning your radon test challenge.
- ▶ **Host a Community Health Fair** or other public event to feature radon health risk information. Coordinate with your local health care providers and other health-focused groups, such as the American Lung Association, to have booths, educational sessions, and presentations on radon and radon testing. Invite your mayor or other officials to your event to issue a proclamation and to conduct a press event to promote radon testing and mitigation.
- ▶ **Work with Your Local Schools** to provide radon education to students. Contact your high school or junior high science and health departments and arrange to have someone speak to classes about radon and radon testing. Provide the class with radon educational materials and coupons for discounted radon test kits.



## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

- ▶ **Identify “Non-traditional” Avenues for Radon Education.** In addition to traditional media outlets, there are a variety of other opportunities for educating your community about radon. Churches, community centers, even local beauty salons and barbershops, can be effective venues for reaching out to your community. Contact ministers, community leaders, and local civic leaders and encourage them to promote radon awareness and testing to their members. Provide them with educational materials and information on test kits to make it easy for them to partner with you.
- ▶ **Arrange a Display at Local Sporting Events.** Set up a booth or display near a concession stand or ticket window and distribute radon educational materials and test kit coupons. Work with the sporting venue to show radon Public Service Announcements during half-time or other breaks in play.
- ▶ **Display Radon Information at Public Gathering Places.** Libraries, community centers, malls, and transit centers frequented by members of your community are perfect locations to provide radon education and testing materials. Supply these locations with radon materials and ask them to display the materials in a prominent location. Be sure to check back with these locations frequently and provide them with additional materials if necessary.
- ▶ **Host a Community Baby Shower.** Many communities conduct community baby showers or other events for new or expectant mothers. This provides a perfect opportunity to provide families in your community with information about a variety of health topics, including the importance of testing for radon. Provide educational materials and a test kit coupon to all attendees.
- ▶ **Provide Radon Education at Green House Exhibits.** Incorporate radon-resistant construction techniques into a green house or eco-house exhibit at state fairs, green building shows, museums, and other venues. Work with exhibit organizers to provide outreach and educational materials for visitors.



## Building Partnerships

- ▶ **Build a Radon Coalition in Your Community.** There are many individuals and organizations in your community that have an interest in health topics. Hold an open forum for interested individuals to attend and then establish a coalition to promote radon awareness in your community. Every member of your coalition will have unique ideas for radon activities and will have access to different parts of your community. Working together as a group will be the most effective way to make radon testing and mitigation a reality in all buildings in your community.
- ▶ **Connect with Local Businesses.** Home improvement and hardware stores may carry radon test kits. Encourage them to promote radon testing in homes, schools, and other buildings. Ask them to create radon test kit displays in prominent store locations during National Radon Action Month and to include information on radon testing in mailings or other advertisements during January.
- ▶ **Contact Your Local University Medical Schools and Health Care Professionals.** Health care students and practitioners can serve as speakers for your health fairs and community events. You can also work with health care providers to incorporate radon messages into their practices and provide educational materials for their patients.
- ▶ **Coordinate with Your Local Utilities** to promote radon awareness and testing. Send a bill insert to your local utility providers (e.g. water, gas, electric) and ask them to include it with their January bill statement mailings. This is an easy, effective, and inexpensive way to reach the vast majority of your community.

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

- ▶ **Coordinate with Welcome Wagon or other “New Home” Programs.** Your community may have a “Welcome Wagon” or other programs to welcome new residents. Provide these programs with brochures and test kit coupons to include with welcome packages for new residents. Be sure to include information about your coalition or program so that individuals can follow up with you if they have questions.
- ▶ **Ask Local Chapters of Health and Environmental Organizations to Promote Radon Awareness.** Many local organizations in your community have regular newsletters, listservs, or mailings that they use to reach their members. Contact them to ask them to run an article on radon health risks, testing, mitigation, and Radon Resistant New Construction. Be sure to include information on how to obtain additional information.

### Media Outreach

- ▶ **Promote Radon Public Service Announcements (PSAs).** EPA has a variety of print, radio, and television PSAs available at no cost to educate your community about the dangers of radon and the importance of radon testing. Hand delivering PSAs to your local media outlets is an effective way to reach large portions of your community, and often stations will run PSAs for free! Keep in mind that people in your community may speak languages other than English, so be sure to use EPA's bi-lingual materials and to reach out to media outlets that serve non-English speaking audiences. Visit [www.epapsa.com](http://www.epapsa.com) to view and order PSA materials.
- ▶ **Conduct a Media Campaign.** In addition to promoting PSAs, contact your local media and ask them to run stories on radon during the radon testing season. Provide the media with fact sheets and other background materials and offer spokespeople for interviews. See page 10 of this Event Planning Kit for information on working with the media.
- ▶ **Develop a Compelling Local Story** that will put a face on radon in your community. Invite the media to talk with people who have tested their homes and successfully mitigated a radon problem. Providing the media with local radon data (available from your state radon program state or testing companies) will also help you localize the story for your community. Don't forget to provide information on test kit availability and qualified radon mitigation professionals in your community.
- ▶ **Identify Key Spokespeople in Your Community** that can serve as recognizable and respected “faces” for your radon program. Perhaps you can engage local politicians, celebrities, scientists, or others that people in your community recognize and trust. Use your spokespeople for media interviews and to publicize your radon activities. Encourage your spokespeople to publicly test their homes for radon and publicize their results and subsequent actions if their tests show radon in excess of EPA's action level. You can also contact your state radon program to help identify radon technical experts if needed.
- ▶ **Write a Press Release** about radon and your radon activities and distribute it to your local media outlets. A sample press release that you can customize for your community is included in this Event Planning Kit on page 12.
- ▶ **Write a Letter to the Editor** of your local paper(s) to educate your community about the health risks of radon and to encourage people to test their homes.



## Steps for Planning Successful

# Radon Outreach Activities

Conducting successful National Radon Action Month events and other activities will go a long way toward educating your community about radon and the importance of radon testing and fixing.

There are several key steps to conducting a successful National Radon Action Month activity or event. These include:

- 1** Set goals for your activity/event
- 2** Plan your activities
- 3** Conduct your activity
- 4** Measure your results

Below we present ideas to help you think through, plan, conduct, and evaluate your activities.

### 1. Setting Your Goals

Whether you are conducting a single National Radon Action Month event, or developing an entire radon risk reduction program for your community, it is important to set goals to define what you will achieve. Establishing goals will help you to think through which activities provide the most potential for reducing radon risks in your community.

Whenever possible, your goals should be measurable (meaning you have ways to track your progress against your goal) and should include a timeline for achievement. Examples of radon goals that might make sense for your community include:

- ▶ By 2008, 50% of all homes in my community will have been tested for radon.
- ▶ By 2010, 75% of homes in my community that have radon levels in excess of EPA's action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) will have been mitigated.

- ▶ By 2012, 50% of all new homes in my community will be built using radon-resistant construction techniques.

In order to establish your program goals, it is always a good idea to know your baseline (i.e. where you are starting from). Your local health department or state program may be able to provide you with information on the number of radon tests conducted in your area to date, the number of homes tested that have radon levels that exceed EPA's radon action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), and information on the number of new homes built in your area. This baseline information will help you set goals for your program and activities that are reasonable and attainable.

In addition to your overall program goals, it is important to establish other outputs and outcomes to measure the success of your activities. You might choose to measure:

- ▶ # of people attending an event.
- ▶ # of radon educational materials distributed.
- ▶ # of radon test kit coupons distributed and collected (redeemed).
- ▶ # of radon test kits distributed.
- ▶ # of calls to your or your state's radon program.
- ▶ # of "hits" on your radon Web site.
- ▶ # of articles about radon published in local media (and how many people are reached).
- ▶ # of radon PSAs aired (and how many people are reached).
- ▶ # of proclamations or radon challenges issued.
- ▶ # of media interviews conducted.
- ▶ # of radon presentations given.

For every activity you plan, you should consider what you would like to measure and how each activity relates to your radon risk reduction goals. Without this information, it may be difficult to determine whether your events were successful.



## 2. Planning Your Activities

Once you have decided on your goals and how you will measure your effectiveness, the next step is to plan your activities. The sooner you begin your planning, the more likely you will be able to secure the people and resources you need to have it be a success. Your activity plan should include:

- ▶ The action steps you will take to implement your activities.
- ▶ Assignment of responsibilities (i.e. who will help you in your efforts and what will they do).
- ▶ Timeline.
- ▶ Resources needed (i.e. what people, materials, or other resources will you need to plan and execute your event).

In planning your program or activity, there are several things you might want to consider:

- ▶ **Start Realistically.** It is better to have a successful small event than an unsuccessful large event. Know your available resources and the time you have available so you can plan an event that will maximize those resources. Your goal setting and planning should help you decide the best size event(s) for your community.
- ▶ **Meet Your Audience's Needs.** When planning your event(s), keep in mind who you are trying to reach, how they like to receive information, and who they most trust on issues related to health. Locate your activity in a place that is convenient for your target audience and consider how best to promote it.
- ▶ **Identify Key Speakers and Participants Early.** If your event requires an expert speaker or local official (e.g. a mayor or local celebrity), the sooner you can contact them and get your event on their calendar, the better. Talk with members of your target audience to determine who they trust for their health information. You are more likely to get participants in your events if they are excited about the speakers. It is also a good idea to identify back-up speakers.
- ▶ **Promote Your Event Broadly.** As part of your planning, determine how you will publicize your event. Consider the outlets (media and other) and methods that are the most known to and trusted by your target audience. Determine what lead time outlets need in order to publicize your event. And remember, not everyone gets their information from the same source, so consider a variety of outlets for promoting your events. Visit [www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html) to publicize your event on the National Radon Action Month Web site.
- ▶ **Make Your Event Interactive.** Depending on your event, be sure to allow plenty of time for your participants to ask questions and to interact with your speakers and other experts. If your activity includes information on radon testing, be sure to have sample test kits available and to demonstrate how to use test kits. Events can also be a good opportunity to form alliances and get commitments from partners.
- ▶ **Have Plenty of Materials On-Hand.** From health fairs to press events, it is critical that you have enough materials available to meet your audience's needs. Be sure to anticipate how many people will attend your event and to have materials on-hand for everyone. This is especially true for radon test kit coupons. Participants will be more likely to test if they can get a coupon onsite at your event. Also, people are more likely to attend events if they know they may receive free materials and giveaways. Publicize the free resources you will have at your event. (See page 17 for a list of EPA materials that we will send to you at no cost. In addition, your state radon program may have radon informational materials and nominal giveaways for use at your event.)

### Using Radon Test Kits to Track Results

You can use test kits to track your program results. The National Safety Council (NSC) provides community groups with customizable radon test kit coupons that can be used to promote radon testing. NSC can assign your community (or even a specific activity) a specific test kit coupon number. For more information about the NSC test kit coupon program, please contact Kristin Marstiller at [marstilk@nsc.org](mailto:marstilk@nsc.org).

You can also contact your local test kit manufacturer or provider for information on ordering test kits or test kit coupons with special codes or serial numbers linked to your activity or program. With tracking codes, you may be able to find out how many test kits were purchased and sent to the radon laboratory for analysis in addition to determining radon test results. Contact your state radon program, details available at [www.epa.gov/iaq/wherelive.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/wherelive.html), for more information about obtaining test kits from your state or from a radon testing company or laboratory in your area.

### 3. Implementing Your Plan

Once you have set your goals and made your plans, it is time to act! All of your advanced planning will help your National Radon Action Month activities come off more smoothly.

#### Successful events:

- ▶ Are well publicized to ensure the target audience knows where and when the event is, how they get there, and what to expect.
- ▶ Have clear, achievable, and measurable goals.
- ▶ Involve careful, thoughtful planning.
- ▶ Have built-in mechanisms for tracking the activity's success in relation to the established goals and objectives. (See the following section on measuring activity results).

Keep in mind that increasing awareness and motivating people to take action takes time. Creating increased awareness about radon and the importance of radon testing will not happen overnight. However, each event that you plan or activity that you undertake will bring you closer to your goal of safeguarding your community's health.

### 4. Measuring Your Results

Measuring the results of your program or activity is important for determining success. When measuring the success of your radon activities, ask yourself:

- ▶ How did my activities contribute to achieving my goals?
- ▶ What impact is my program or activity having in my community?



- ▶ How can the experience and the data I receive help me to improve my program?
- ▶ What other activities might be more effective in educating my community about radon and the importance of radon testing and mitigation?

Measuring results can be relatively simple depending on the activity or event. You might want to consider administering a simple questionnaire or survey to participants. You can also use an event log or other tracking sheet at your event to keep track of:

- ▶ How many people attend (and their contact information).
- ▶ How many materials are distributed, especially if you are giving out radon test kits or test kit coupons.
- ▶ How many members of the press did your event attract and how much media coverage does your event generate.
- ▶ How many requests for follow up or additional information do you receive.
- ▶ How many people pledge to test their home for radon.

These short-term results are important for understanding the success of your activities. Remember only mitigation and radon-resistant new construction will contribute to a reduction in lung cancer deaths in your community. In order to measure these long-term results, you might want to follow up with calls or emails to event participants to inquire about behavior changes that occurred as a result of your activities.

EPA is particularly interested in hearing about your successful activities and your results so we can share great ideas and effective activities with our nationwide network of radon partners. EPA is asking community groups to voluntarily notify us when you have an event and what results you achieve. You can register your event on the National Radon Action Month Web site at [www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html) to publicize it ahead of time. After your event, please return to the Web site to let us know your results.

**Basic**

# Radon Facts

## Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil, and water from the natural decay of uranium. While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. You can't see, smell, or taste it, but an elevated radon level in your home may be affecting the health of your family.

Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the country each year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. If you smoke and your home has radon, your risk of lung cancer can be higher.



## Radon is found all over the United States.

Radon has been found in elevated levels in homes in every state. No area of the country is free from risk. Indeed, two homes right next to each other can have vastly different radon levels. Just because your neighbor's house does not have an elevated level of radon does not mean that your house will have a low radon level. The only way to know if your home is under the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L is to test.

High levels of radon in homes usually come from the surrounding soil. Radon gas enters through cracks and openings—such as doors, windows, and plumbing features—on the lower levels of your home. Hot spots include basements, first-floor rooms, and garages, but radon can be found anywhere in your house.

## You should test for radon.

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all homes in the U.S. be tested for radon. Testing your home for radon is easy to do. If your home has a radon problem, you can take steps to fix it to protect yourself and your family.

## How to Obtain Radon Test Kits

To obtain an easy-to-use radon test kit, you can:

- ❑ Purchase a test kit from your local home improvement or hardware store. Many kits are priced under \$25.00.
- ❑ Visit the National Safety Council (NSC) Web site, available at [www.nsc.org/issues/radon](http://www.nsc.org/issues/radon), for information on obtaining test kits at a discounted price.
- ❑ Contact your state radon program, details available at [www.epa.gov/iaq/wherelive.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/wherelive.html), for more information about obtaining test kits from your state or from a radon testing company or laboratory in your area.

You can find out if your home has an elevated radon level by conducting a simple test. It's as easy as opening a package, placing a radon detector in a designated area, and, after a set number of days, sending the detector back to a lab for analysis. The lab will then inform you of your radon test results.

Radon test kits are available at your local home improvement or hardware store, or in some cases from your state radon office. You can also order them from the National Safety Council (NSC) or radon testing companies. Another option is to hire a qualified tester to do a radon



## Basic Radon Facts *(continued)*

test for you. Contact your state radon office about obtaining a list of qualified testers. Information about testing your home for radon and finding a test kit is also available by calling 1-800-SOS-RADON.

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactivity. EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that homes with radon levels at 4 pCi/L or higher should be fixed. EPA also recommends that Americans consider fixing their homes for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L. Based on a national residential radon survey completed in 1991, the average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L in the United States. The average outdoor level is about 0.4 pCi/L.



### **You can fix a radon problem.**

The cost of making repairs to reduce the radon level depends on several factors, including how your home was built. Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs, like painting or having a new hot water heater installed. The average cost for a contractor to mitigate radon levels in a home is about \$1,200, although costs can range from \$800 to approximately \$2,500. Look in your local phone book or call your state radon office to locate radon mitigators in your area if you find an elevated radon level in your home.

### **New homes can be built with radon-resistant features.**

Radon-resistant construction methods can be effective in reducing radon entry. When used properly, these simple and cost-effective techniques can help reduce the accumulation of radon gas in homes.

Every new home should be tested after occupancy, even if it was built using radon-resistant construction methods. If radon levels above EPA's action level of 4 pCi/L are detected, it is easier and less expensive to reduce radon levels in homes that have been built with radon-resistant construction techniques.

*Radon presents a serious health risk, but it can be controlled easily and cost-effectively. Take action today. Encourage your friends and family members to do the same!*

# Media Outreach

## Tips

**A successful media outreach approach can increase the success of your event. The following tips will help you...and capture media attention for your radon activity, event, or program.**

### **Tell the radon story.**

The best way to gain the media's attention is to provide facts about the dangers of radon to public health. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, second only to smoking, and radon exposure is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

- ▶ Remember to involve the media in all radon-related activities, such as testing demonstrations and poster contests.
- ▶ Invite the media to talk with people who have tested their homes for radon and successfully mitigated the radon problem, or whose homes were built radon-resistant.
- ▶ Arrange for interviews with doctors and other respected experts and spokespeople who can discuss the dangers of radon and steps to mitigate health risks.
- ▶ Plan a press conference at an "on-the-scene" location, such as at a home that will be tested for radon to demonstrate how easy it is to test and to provide the media with a visual for publicizing the issue.

Once you have designed an interesting event, there are a few general steps you can follow to ensure that you get the best coverage possible.

### **Build successful relationships with the media.**

- ▶ Establish a list of national and local media, taking note of beat reporters. Beat reporters are assigned to a specific area or topic, such as community health and science.
- ▶ Contact beat reporters and editors to introduce yourself and to establish a point of contact for information.
- ▶ Think of reporters as avenues for getting radon information to the public.

### **Start with a good list.**

**A good list is one that is relevant.** In choosing whom to approach, it is important to consider who is likely to want to tell your radon story, as well as whom you would like to do it. You may want to include small newspapers and community newsletters in addition to major newspapers and television and radio stations. While you want to cast a broad net, you do not want to waste time and resources with media outlets or reporters who are not right for the event.

At major newspapers and television and radio stations, in most cases, it is appropriate to contact the assignment desk or assignment editor. The assignment editor will usually give you the name and contact information for the beat reporter who covers topics related to radon.

In radio, you should contact the news director. Your local library may have a media guide listing names and addresses of the people you may want to contact. You can usually get this information from the Web site of the radio station as well. Be sure to get your contact's e-mail address. Many reporters prefer to get releases and other background materials by e-mail rather than hard copy.

**A good list is an accurate list.** Once you have developed a list of potential contacts to target, double check that list for accuracy by calling the publication or station. Call the main number to make sure the person you have selected to contact is still in that position, and that the contact information you have is accurate.

### **Write a good pitch letter.**

After you have your targeted list of reporters and editors, you need a pitch letter. The pitch letter tells editors and reporters why they should cover radon issues and your local program activities. Here are a few things to remember when writing your pitch letter.

- ▶ **A good letter is correct.** Double checking facts, spelling, and grammar is a crucial first step that is often overlooked. If the information in the letter isn't presented correctly, you may not get the coverage you want.
- ▶ **A good letter is concise.** Assignment editors and reporters have very limited time, and reading pitch letters isn't always a high priority. If you want to get coverage, you have to get their attention quickly and convey information efficiently. Your letter shouldn't be more than one page. A one-page letter can accurately convey the basic information: radon health risks; the reason your radon event is newsworthy; the time and location; and a number and person to call for more information. Include your press release and background about your organization with the letter, and answer any additional questions in your follow-up call.

## Write a press release.

A well written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising could bring to radon. Please see pages 12-13 for press release tips and a sample press release.

## Develop a media kit.

Make it as easy as possible for the media to do their jobs. Provide them with statistical information about radon from reputable sources and provide simple graphics if you have them. Anything you can do to make it easy for reporters to write a story will help. Put together a media kit with a full range of information about radon issues, testing and mitigation, radon-resistant new construction, and the specifics of your radon event. A media kit can include the following materials:

- ▶ Pitch letter
- ▶ Press release\*
- ▶ Radon fact sheet\*
- ▶ Radon materials order form\*
- ▶ Biography or background information of speakers and experts available to talk about radon issues
- ▶ Proclamation\*
- ▶ Calendar of events
- ▶ List of radon kit manufacturers and laboratories and their toll-free numbers
- ▶ List of local stores that carry radon kits, complete with contact information
- ▶ Your contact information
- ▶ State radon program contact information
- ▶ Web site addresses as appropriate

## Follow up.

You've sent your materials out to the reporters and editors on your list and allowed time for them to look over the information. Now it's time to make follow-up calls. During your follow-up calls, you should:

- ▶ **Be prepared.** Make notes for your calls and be prepared to take notes during the calls. Plan what you are going to say ahead of time and stick to it. Try to anticipate any questions or objections you might hear and have an answer prepared. Always remind the media that radon is a serious health risk that is easy to overlook because it is an odorless, invisible, and tasteless killer. Also remember to send the message that radon testing and mitigation is convenient and cost-effective.
- ▶ **Be polite and brief.** Editors and reporters are usually on a very tight schedule and they will appreciate it if you get right to the point. Identify yourself, tell them why you are calling, and offer to answer any questions they may have.
- ▶ **Ask for coverage.** After you have confirmed receipt of your letter and answered any questions, ask for coverage of your event.

\*Samples of these materials are included in this Event Planning Kit. Some samples are provided in MS Word and can be accessed at [www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html).

## Remember these points.

**Timing is everything.** Consider the editor's schedule when you place your calls. Newspapers are usually working on a mid-afternoon deadline for the next day, so late afternoon is the best time to call. Call the staff of noon news programs after 3:00 p.m. and call the evening news in the morning.

**More than one call may be required.** This is especially true with television stations. Often the assignments for a given day are not made until that morning. The station's ability to send a crew to your event can be affected by other events taking place that day. If a media outlet has expressed interest in covering your event but has not committed to it, call on the day of the event and ask again for their coverage and remind them of the details.

**Don't get discouraged.** You are competing against other story ideas and current events. You might feel as though you are getting the run-around. It's possible that one person will tell you to speak to another or to call back at another time. If so, follow their directions. It is also possible that people will be short with you because they are busy. The best strategy is to be courteous, helpful, creative, and most of all, persistent. Remember that the media needs news to fill their programs and newspapers. Let them know why your story is worthy and make it as easy as you can for them to cover your issue and events.

**Reporters may not attend your press conference as a matter of policy.** This is where personal relationships help in convincing them to make an exception. However, if a reporter tells you in advance that he or she will not be able to make it to your press conference, send them a press release anyway and encourage them to use the information to build a story with their own sources. Determine the point of contact reporters may attempt to call for additional information and discuss with these individuals the importance of providing a clear message that emphasizes the health risks and the opportunities for managing the risks. The best way to establish good relationships with the media is to offer them opportunities for interesting and newsworthy stories. Offer a hard-to-get interview, local human interest stories, eye-catching visuals or pictures, and good audio for those in radio news. Always present your information as something that readers, listeners, and viewers deserve to learn.

**Sample**

# Press Release

Send a press release to the media to announce your radon campaign and increase your community's awareness of radon issues. A well written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising. Here are a few steps to take to ensure you get the coverage you deserve.

- ▶ Keep your press release concise. Reporters and editors don't have time to read through lots of text. Your press release should be no longer than one page and should focus on the facts and the call to action for your community.
- ▶ Grab their attention. At the upper left-hand margin, just under your letterhead, you should have the words "For Immediate Release" in bold, capital letters.
- ▶ Make it easy for them to learn more. Somewhere near the top of the page, list your contact information including your name, title, telephone numbers, fax number, and e-mail address. Also, indicate if you have health or other experts on hand to provide interviews.
- ▶ Include a headline such as "Health Risks in Our Community: How You Can Protect Your Family".
- ▶ Include a dateline or the city and state from which the press release is issued.
- ▶ Craft a lead paragraph. The first paragraph should grab the reader's attention and contain relevant information, such as the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) if you're publicizing an upcoming event.



The sample release on the next page can serve as a guide for creating your own. Be sure to time the release during or near National Radon Action Month. Or, if your radon campaign activities will occur during an alternate time, send this out to fit your schedule. Print the letter on your organization's stationary and fill in local information where **[indicated]**. You may also wish to tailor this release to announce a special event, press conference, or other local campaign activity. See the Media Outreach Tips section on page 10 of this Kit for more information about working with the media.

## Sample Press Release *(continued)*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Point of contact's name and phone number]

### PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH IN THEIR HOMES RADON – A SILENT KILLER

#### Citizens Urged to Test Homes for Radon, the Second Leading Cause of Lung Cancer in U.S.

[Your city, state, date] — [Organization] is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families. In our community, [organization] is conducting [briefly describe local radon action activities] during National Radon Action Month in January.

Radon is present at elevated levels in about [X]% of [area] homes (info available from your state radon office). Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the leading second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. "However," says [spokesperson] from [organization] "because you can't see or smell radon, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes."

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores or directly from radon testing companies. Many are priced under \$25.00. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed (anywhere from \$800 to about \$2,500).

[Organization] urges [community] residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. Radon poses a serious threat to our community's health but there is a straightforward solution. For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, call [organization] at [organization's phone number] or visit our Web site at [organization's Web site], or visit EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon).



Sample

# Proclamation

by Local Official

An official proclamation can be used to attract media attention when the Governor, Mayor, or other state or local official endorses observance of National Radon Action Month. Send notice of the official proclamation to local media outlets, post it on bulletin boards in local schools, hardware stores, real estate offices, and other relevant venues to attract attention for radon issues during National Radon Action Month.

First, write a letter to the governmental official requesting that he or she issue a proclamation. In addition to the request letter, you should provide a sample proclamation for the official to use, along with relevant information about radon health risk, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction. We have included a sample letter and proclamation that you can tailor for your community's needs.

Note that your request should be sent to the official's office by December 1, about one month prior to National Radon Action Month. This allows enough time to coordinate an official signing ceremony where you can attract media attention.

## Sample Letter to Government Official

[Date]

[Honorific (i.e. "The Honorable") and full name of official]

[Title of official]

[Address of official]

Dear [Honorific and name]:

I am writing to request that you proclaim the month of January as Radon Action Month in **[county/city/town and/or state]**. Your proclamation would be in conjunction with other cities and states around the country who, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are taking the lead in observing National Radon Action Month.

In **[area]**, radon is present at elevated levels in about **[X]**% of homes **(information available from your state radon office)**.

One in 15 homes across the United States has elevated radon levels. With more than 20,000 deaths each year, radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. In light of these concerns, the EPA has designated January as National Radon Action Month. During National Radon Action Month, **[organization name]**, in conjunction with EPA, will strengthen our efforts to educate the public about the dangers of radon and what can be done to minimize the health risk from exposure to elevated levels of indoor radon. As part of our education efforts we will: **[insert activities]**.

I have enclosed a fact sheet that will give you more information about the dangers of exposure to indoor radon. I have also taken the liberty of drafting a sample proclamation for your consideration. We would be truly honored to have your support. Please contact me if you require any additional information. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Title]

[Phone number and/or email address]

# Sample Proclamation by Local Official *(continued)*

YOUR CITY, COUNTY, OR STATE



YOUR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

## **[County Executive's, Mayor's, Governor's] Proclamation In Support of Radon Action Month in [County, City, and/or State]**

WHEREAS, radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas that threatens the health of our citizens;

WHEREAS, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers;

WHEREAS, one in 15 homes across the U.S. has an elevated radon level;

WHEREAS, any home in **[community]** may have an elevated level of radon, even if other homes in the same neighborhood do not;

WHEREAS, testing for radon is simple and inexpensive;

WHEREAS, identified radon problems can be fixed;

WHEREAS, **[your organization]** and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are supporting efforts to encourage Americans to test their homes for radon, mitigate elevated levels of radon, and build new homes with radon-resistant materials and features.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **[name]**, **[title]** of **[county, city, and/or state]** do hereby proclaim:

JANUARY **[Dates]**, **[Year]**  
Official Radon Action Month  
In **[County, City, and/or State]**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this **[date]** day of **[month]**, in the year **[year]**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Official)

# Event Submittal Form

Thank you for participating in National Radon Action Month! Everyone's efforts are bolstered when they can share ideas with others and learn about events in their area. For this reason, we hope that you will submit information about your event to EPA. We thank you for your hard work!

To submit this information for your event, please go to our Web site at [www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rnactionmonth.html) or fax this form to (703) 247-6055.

## Sponsoring Organization

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Web site \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_





## Event Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Event Web site \_\_\_\_\_  
Event Contact Name and Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Brief Description of Event \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Expected Outcomes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





# Radon Materials

## Order Form

EPA has both print and electronic materials available to you at no-cost. Some materials have limited quantities. Make sure you get your materials requests in early so you have your materials for National Radon Action Month.

Publication		Quantity
	<p><b>Breathing Easy: <i>What Home Buyers and Sellers Should Know About Radon</i></b></p> <p>This short, educational video covers how to address radon in residential real estate transactions. The primary audiences are home buyers and sellers, real estate sales agents, and brokers. Home inspectors, mortgage lenders, other real estate practitioners, and radon services providers will also find the video helpful. This publication is available in VHS, CD and DVD. VHS [EPA 402-V-02-003]; CD [EPA 402-C-03-003]; DVD [EPA 402-C-03-002]</p>	Limit 1 per order.
	<p><b>Building Radon Out: A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Build Radon-Resistant Homes</b></p> <p>This 81-page, fully illustrated guide contains all the information you need to educate home builders about radon-resistant new construction (RRNC). [EPA 402-K-01-002, April 2001]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDF version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/images/buildradonout.pdf">www.epa.gov/radon/images/buildradonout.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Limit 5 per order.
	<p><b>Buying a New Home: <i>How to Protect Your Family From Radon</i></b></p> <p>This introductory brochure provides basic information on radon-resistant construction in new homes. [EPA 402-F-98-008, April 1998]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/rnrc-tri.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/rnrc-tri.html</a></li> </ul>	Only available online.
	<p><b>A Citizen's Guide to Radon: <i>The guide to protecting yourself and your family from radon</i></b></p> <p>This recently revised guidance offers strategies for testing your home for radon and addresses what steps to take after you have tested, the risk of radon, and radon myths. [EPA 402-K02-006, Revised September 2005]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html</a></li> <li>• PDF version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/images/citizensguide.pdf">www.epa.gov/radon/images/citizensguide.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Only available online.
	<p><b>Consumer's Guide to Radon Reduction: <i>How to Reduce Radon Levels in Your Home</i></b></p> <p>This recently revised booklet is for people who have tested their home for radon and confirmed that they have elevated radon levels. [EPA 402-K-03-002, Revised February 2003]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/consguid.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/consguid.html</a></li> <li>• PDF version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/images/consguid.pdf">www.epa.gov/radon/images/consguid.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Limit 5 per order.
	<p><b>El Radón: <i>Guía para su protección y la de su familia</i></b></p> <p>"A Citizen's Guide to Radon" in Spanish. [EPA 402-K-93-005, September 1993]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/elradon.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/elradon.html</a></li> </ul>	Only available online.
	<p><b>EPA Map of Radon Zones</b></p> <p>The purpose of this map is to assist National, State, and local organizations to target their resources and to implement radon-resistant building codes. This map is not intended to be used to determine if a home in a given zone should be tested for radon. Homes with elevated levels of radon have been found in all three zones. All homes should be tested regardless of geographic location. [EPA 402-F-06-005-2/2006]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print-quality versions in JPG and PDF: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html">www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html</a></li> </ul>	Only available online.

## Radon Materials Order Form (continued)

Publication	Quantity
 <p><b>Guía del Radon para el Comprador y Vendedor de Viviendas</b>          "Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon" in Spanish. [EPA 402-K-02-001, July 2002]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguidsp.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguidsp.html</a></li> <li>PDF version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/images/hmbuyguidsp.pdf">www.epa.gov/radon/images/hmbuyguidsp.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Limit 5 per order.
 <p><b>Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon</b>          This booklet is intended for anyone who is buying or selling a home, real estate and relocation professionals, home inspectors, and others. [EPA 402-K-05-005, May 2005]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguid.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguid.html</a></li> <li>PDF version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/images/hmbuyguid.pdf">www.epa.gov/radon/images/hmbuyguid.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Limit 5 per order.
 <p><b>Learning About Radon A Part Of Nature</b>          Written for Native Americans, this 18-page booklet discusses radon's place in the world, the basics on testing, and how homes can be fixed to reduce radon levels. [EPA 402-K-02-002, February 2002]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDF version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/learning_about_radon.pdf">www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/learning_about_radon.pdf</a></li> </ul>	Limit 5 per order.
 <p><b>Radon—A Physician's Guide: <i>The Health Threat With A Simple Solution</i></b>          This booklet enlists physicians in the national effort to inform the American public about the serious health risk posed by indoor radon gas. [EPA 402-K-93-008, September 1993]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTML version: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/physic.html">www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/physic.html</a></li> </ul>	Only available online.

### Ordering Materials for National Radon Action Month

- EPA has a variety of print, radio, and television PSAs available in English and Spanish. View and order Radon PSAs at [www.epapsa.com](http://www.epapsa.com).
- EPA publishes a variety of documents in both print and electronic formats. Order materials online at [www.epa.gov/epahome/publications.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/publications.htm).
- You may also order the EPA materials listed in the Event Planning Kit by completing this form and sending it to:

IAQ Info

Fax: (703) 356-5386

[iaqinfo@aol.com](mailto:iaqinfo@aol.com)

Or by calling:

(800) 438-4318 or (703) 356-4020

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### For Further Information:

- Contact your state radon program director, available at [www.epa.gov/iaq/whereyoulive.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/whereyoulive.html), to find out about additional radon materials to help you educate your community.
- The National Safety Council's Radon Hotlines:
  - 1-800-SOS-RADON [1-800-767-7236] (24 hour informational recording)
  - 1-800-55 RADON [1-800-557-2366] (speak with an information specialist)
  - 1-866-528-3187 (Spanish speakers)